

PEOPLE & THINGS By ATTICUS

WHO made the money out of the big out-of-hours trade in gilt-edged stocks last Wednesday week, on the eve of the raising of Bank Rate? We shall probably never know, but many whispers are going round the City.

The semi-official figure for the volume of overnight transactions is £4 million—not a big figure in comparison with the scores of millions which often change hands in a few hours. The profit on this by the next day could have been £200,000. A whacking sum even for rich men to make in one day. But were the sellers individuals?

It is being said that there was one single selling order for £3 million. Only the strongest kind of operator could have entered into such a transaction. Since the gilt-edged market does cash business only—no speculating here on a shoe-string from Account to Account—it is obvious that if big money was made it was made by concern with very big assets.

The fact is that there were strong rumours of impending steps to intensify the credit squeeze, and some people drew their own deductions about Bank Rate. It was a gamble, but a pretty safe one.

The maximum movement of gilt-edged on a normal No-Change day would be perhaps 1 per cent.: the rise of Bank Rate caused a loss of 3 to 4 points. So the speculators were laying money at, say, 100 to 8 against an horse win—they may have thought—an even chance of winning. Who wouldn't?

General Spinks

GENERAL SPEIDEL'S visit to London as Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces, Central Europe, has been a complete negation of the genial public relations which we have come to consider as essential to these international officers.

A heavy security screen at London Airport included enough Intelligence Officers to keep reporters and photographers well out of range, and when the party arrived at the Dorchester General Speidel went straight to his suite.

He was induced to come downstairs again by the G.O.C. Eastern Command, Lieut.-Gen. Sir Charles Coleman, so that he could be photographed by General Coleman pouring him a cup of tea, but returned to his room at once—without drinking the tea.

No doubt General Speidel has taken a shrewd assessment of the delicacies of his position and regards silence as his best card, at least for the moment.

Caifra to Return

GABRIEL CAIFRA, the thirty-six-year-old Hungarian pianist, returned to his Paris home this week a happy man. He had won unusual



Gyorgy Czifra at practice.

panegyrics from London critics at his Festival Hall debut last week-end, as well as captivating a new audience.

Before he fled a refugee, from his native Budapest last year, his prowess was merely whispered about in the West; his London triumph follows similar successes wherever he has been heard.

He remains a simple and unaffected family man, devoted to his wife and young son who travel with him, grateful for his reception and delighted by it, a virtuoso singularly free from the tantrums and temperament that might be expected from the dash and fire of his piano-playing.

He will return here in January and again in June, when I predict he will meet enthusiasm even greater.

£50,000-a-year Genius

WHO is the most highly paid woman executive in America? The most reliable statistics point to Miss Dorothy Shaver, who earns a yearly £50,000 as president of the New York store of Lord and Taylor. She arrives in London tomorrow on a pleasure and business visit.

At one point in the last Presidential elections her name was being seriously canvassed as candidate for the first woman vice-president of the United States, and before long she is expected to be offered that final accolade of successful American business-womanhood—an ambassadorship.

A granddaughter of one of the toughest Southern generals in the Civil War, she has proved one of the most unlikely of business geniuses, combining with a hard head for figures the most outrageous charm, and a knowledge of modern art which has landed her on the boards of the Metropolitan Museum and the New York Museum of Modern Art.

Sir Richard Burdidge, chairman of Harrods, who has known Miss Shaver for many years and is one of her closest friends here, tells me he

believes she was primarily responsible for the suburban development of the specialty stores in New York, by which the leading stores have branches outside the city.

Crusader from Brazil

ANOTHER notable woman in London last week was Madame Níomar Bittencourt, on a six-month visit to Europe from Brazil. She and her husband, Paulo Bittencourt, who owns one of Brazil's great newspapers, "Correio da Manhã," are conducting a crusade to better the taste of their countrymen.

Madame Bittencourt is founder and president of the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro, which is nearly completed, and which will house a collection of international standing. It has cost about £2,750,000 to build, on a magnificent site on land reclaimed from the sea. When completed it is likely to be the first building one will see when approaching Rio and the Brazilian coast.

Madame Bittencourt, like Miss Shaver, is a perfect blend of the society and career woman. The main reason for her visit to Europe is to meet contemporary artists and to study their work. She is now in Paris, and no doubt she is causing quite a furore there.

Stalingrad Story

I SUPPOSE Stalingrad would rank among the first dozen of the world's great battles. Fascinated by its heroic tortuises, Mr. Ronald Smith, author of a number of books and a former British secret agent, wrote to Marshal Bulganin suggesting that he should undertake an official history. Not surprisingly, there was silence from the Kremlin.

After a year, Mr. Smith wrote again, expressing mild surprise. Another year passed. Then the Soviet Embassy in London rang Mr. Smith four times in one day. Would he go to Russia to write the story of Stalingrad? He would be given an interpreter, and a Red Army general would be second to assist him.

Mr. Smith is on his way.

Time and Taxes

THE Police Federation, I am told, have rejected a suggestion from one of the more alert branches that an income-tax rebate should be sought for policemen buying watches. Perhaps mindful of the song, "If you want to know the time, ask a policeman," they say it has become a traditional part of the P.C.'s duties to produce his time-piece on demand. Should it not, therefore, rank as expenses for equipment?

The Federation has remained unmoved. "There is no official rule," they point out, "that a policeman must wear a watch. We don't feel there should be."

Somewhat unkindly, they add that although it is not compulsory for policemen to tell the time, no excuse for not knowing

when they should be on duty would be entertained.

Outside, Looking In

MRS. HERMAN LEVIN, who flew in a day-or-so ago to arrange the London presentation of that American legend "My Fair Lady," has grey hair, a pale olive skin, blue eyes, horn-rimmed spectacles, a delicate wit, and a way of misstepping questions that any three-quarter would be proud of.

I noted him down as "New York lawyer," which I am glad to say, he proved to be. He is one of many in his profession who have turned to theatrical management on Broadway—"there is so much litigation in the theatre that we sort of fall into it."

He began his new career in 1948 with a musical entitled "Call Me Mister," which ran for two years, then turned to straight plays, Sartre, among them, with "very little success," unless one can say so and Frederick Lowe came along with their idea of adapting "Pygmalion" and "I climbed on the back of the curtain." His other passion is horse-racing, which he describes as an equally hazardous hobby.

But of all his stories I like the one he tells of a certain who, at the end of a month's holiday, managed to get into the Mark Hellinger Theatre on a recent Saturday night to see "My Fair Lady." It was not, and he had to stand at the back. After the final curtain, however, he said he thought the play was so enchanting that it would run even without him in it.

It was, of course, Rex Harrison.

Fastest Tortoise

FLYING OFFICER ELBERT DU CROISES, of No. 20 Squadron R.A.F., a tortoise serving with the 2nd Tactical Force at Oldenburg, Germany, will be officially promoted to Flight-Lieutenant on Friday. He is the official mascot of the squadron, and one of the world's most celebrated pets. He has a collection of over 500 cuttings from as far as China and Chile, and an American aviation magazine has elected him a life subscriber.

According to the R.A.F. his fame rests on being the first tortoise to break the sound barrier which he has done thirteen times, in his specially designed flying kit. He is also unique in being the only German national commissioned officer in the R.A.F.

His keeper for the past year has been Flying-Officer Cass Maynard, a young Jew who, "Looking after Elbert, seeing he is in position for mess meetings and parties, finding him and flying him is quite a job," he compared with the administrative work involved," he said. "He has personal letters bulging with correspondence from the ends of the earth."

Ladies in Armour House

IT was an odd scene at Armour House last night—ladies dining with the officers and other ranks of the Honourable Artillery Company. It is an almost unheard-of occurrence in recent times.

The ladies, delightfully French, were supporters and wives of the Saboteur's Club, whom the H.A.C. are entertaining for the week-end as a reciprocal hospitality for many visits they have paid to Bales-O'Greens during their last tours. Tomorrow the French party are to be guests of the Governor Within the Tower, British Minister, and then of the Lord Mayor.

No doubt at last night's dinner someone was able to explain to the French ladies how their host, Simon Parker,

captain of the H.A.C. team, happens to be a mere Gunner while lower at the table were junior and senior officers and sergeants. The traditional democratic approach of the H.A.C. mystifies most foreigners.

People and Words

Tell me, is Mr. Churchill still Prime Minister?

—MISS JAYNE MANSFIELD.
Britain is going to let the pinch be better a sharp pinch than a knock-out punch later on.
—DR. CHARLES HILL.

Sound radio is no longer a mass medium for the attentive, but a mass medium for the occupied, for those who are doing something else.
—SIR GEORGE BARNES.

I'm quite sure pain is a jolly good thing for man... keeps you up to the mark.
—SIR COMPTON MACKENZIE.

School attendance at bayonet point is not compatible with the American way of life.
—GOVERNOR FAUBUS.

Skiffle is a kind of do-it-yourself music, and often sounds like it!
—MR. THE TRAVEL.